

THIS IS OUR LIFE



BY
BARRY
GIBB

Barry continues writing for you—telling you in his own words the story of The Bee Gees.

I LEFT you last week with our first public appearance. The three Gibb brothers, me at the ripe old age of nine and the twins (Robin and Maurice) only six, standing on stage at the Gaumont, Manchester . . . and very much lumbered!

We had two mates with us—Paul Jones (what a strange coincidence!) and Kenny Horricks. The idea was that we'd mime to a record. But I shattered the record on the way to the cinema.

There, then, was me with my Christmas present guitar and my brothers with their toy banjos, and we had a skiffle box-bass and no record to mime to. We had to sing live. It was terrible. Really, we were dreadful. We were only kids and we didn't know what was going on. The kids in the Saturday matinee audience expected to see films of Flash Gordon and so on and for a while they got just us. Anyway, we just sang . . .

This, however, gave us a real taste for show business. The five of us were given a shilling each and, of course, we spent it almost instantly —on sweets and ice cream!

Not so long ago I went back to Manchester to see that old Gaumont Cinema and it's now a bingo hall. Shame. I guess I'm very much a sentimentalist but I just wanted to see the place where it all started for us. Now it's gone. But just looking at the site brought back these memories . . .

For those were the Bill Haley days of rock and roll. The kids in the audience didn't scream at us lot of kids—but they did get up and jive in the aisles. It was tremendous. And you should have seen us RUNNING home afterwards . . . excited that we'd been up there on a real stage!

Anyway our Family Gibb moved on. We went to another part of Manchester and immediately the three of us, the brothers, started making what they call personal appearances at the Palatine Cinema, West Didsbury. Again 6 we got a shilling each for our

trouble—or sometimes sixpence. But it didn't matter, not the money side. We genuinely got a kick out of appearing in front of the public.

I told you that our dad was an experienced band-leader. Well, around the time we started appearing in public he was always involved in electronics. He was a TV salesman, then manager of a branch shop. Then he went into refrigerators . . . not IN them, but selling them!

His musician days were long before I remember, but not so long ago we did a TV show in Manchester and Joe Loss was there and HE came over to our dad and said: "Hallo, I know you, don't I?" He did. They both worked the old-time ballrooms.

So this was the scene. Robin, Maurice and I were at school and we worked as well as we could, but the truth was that our hearts were in show business. All right—a shilling an appearance wasn't much, but it was that general air of getting up in front of an audience and singing and playing and fooling around. That gave us our kicks and I'm sorry to say that our

school-teachers thought we were wasting our time. Actually in the years to come there were a lot of people who thought we were wasting our time. . . . But that's life.

The only subject at school that we were good at was history. Don't ask me why. I guess it's because of our imaginations, letting us actually believe we were in a by-gone age. But when our present tour of Britain is over, Robin and I are going to Egypt to take in the historical scene there and also to study Egyptian music. Not to set some crazy new trend, but merely because you can get in a rut over pop music and we like to find something different.

Anyway, I must keep to the point. I'm making a note right now that I MUST keep to the point. And the point is that we three lads made a little bit of a name for ourselves when we were in Manchester. And then suddenly, out of the blue, Mum and Dad announced that we were going to take off for Australia.

Australia? Quick look at the atlas. We went by boat, fare-assisted, and it seemed like being in some wonderland for us. We weren't just flying OVER the different countries. . . we were actually seeing them at ground level.

Now lots of people think that we are Australians. Well, that's understandable. But in fact we were hated down in Aussie-land simply because we were English. In fact, we had to leave school because of the way we were treated. Why some of the other boys actually deliberately landed us in trouble. . . .

Oh, there goes my space for another week. But I'll tell you next week why the Gibb boys were branded as trouble-makers—and why Robin and Maurice literally walked out of school, never to go back!



The Bee Gees. L to r.: Maurice, Robin, Vince, Colin and Barry.